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INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION CREATES
CRITICAL WATER SHORTAGE IN SLASK

Important waterworks projects now under way will improve the supply of potable water in Slask in the next few years. A number of large stations which will be connected with the Slask network are being built beyond the industrial area, and the existing network is being expanded. In 1950, the water supply will increase 38.1 percent over 1946, 56 percent in 1951, 89.1 percent in 1952, 143 percent in 1953, 152.8 percent in 1954, and 201.3 percent in 1955. It is expected that by mid-1953 the supply will equal the demand.

During the second half of May, several localities in Slask experienced a temporary water shortage. The State Waterworks in Katowice reports that up to the present there has always been a water shortage in Slask at certain times, especially during peak consumption, May to August.

The industrial region lies in the watershed of the Wisla and Odra rivers. There are no large reservoirs of deep waters in the Slask area, and the rivers, even if they were not polluted by the industrial plants, could not supply the demand. The geological conditions in the Slask area increase the difficulties of securing water. The mined areas of the coal region allow the water to escape, and sometimes many years of work yield very poor results.

Waterworks projects for the industrial areas must depend on distant and inconveniently located storage tanks and rivers. Besides being a long drawn-out process, this requires a great investment of labor, material, and money.

Since the war, the output of potable water has been gradually increasing in Slask. Taking 1946 as 100, the output amounted to 117.1 in 1948 and 123.8 in 1949, an increase of 23.8 percent in 3 years. However, industrial development further increased demand and the problem has not been solved.

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Industrial consumption amounts to 55 percent of the entire output, 3 times as much as before the war. This is due largely to the modernization of industrial plants which require purified water for their operations. Many industrial plants which previously had supplied their own water from storage tanks have now joined the network. The fact that it takes 3 tons of water to produce one kilogram of paper best illustrates, perhaps, the great volume of water required by industry.

Much of the 45 percent balance of the water supply consumed by households and nonindustrial establishments is wasted. During the dry season much of the water supply is consumed by the 53,000 share-farmers and 50,000 small plot gardeners in Slask who often use the water from the system instead of the naturally stored water at hand. Assuming that each plot is 300 square meters, it would require 30,000 cubic meters per day, at one liter per square meter, to water the total holdings of 30 million square meters. In one day, the Slask share-farmers would consume one day's output of a large pumping station, or 3,000 10-ton tanks.

Because water service is cheap many private consumers waste it, especially during the summer months, thus increasing the demand beyond the capacity of the pumping stations.

Although many stations had a surplus during the recent peak consumption period, they could not distribute the water because the pipes were not adequate.

There are two possible solutions to the water shortage: to restrict consumption in cities under certain conditions, or to cut off the service to industry during certain periods. It is apparent that normal industrial operations must be assured and restriction on household consumption could be avoided with proper conservation and less waste.

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